The Volatile Utopian Real Estate Market

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PREFACE

Twenty songs about anarchism, being an alcoholic/heroin addict, and getting sober. These songs were originally released in three separate batches, now collected for your convenience (and ours!) on a single CD.

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This collection was released in January 2014 by Savage Wasteland Music Collective. Savage Wasteland is a collective record label and anarchist propaganda outlet operated by the members of the punk band Ramshackle Glory. We put out music by us and our friends.

Everything is sold on a sliding-scale basis, meaning that prices are only suggested and you can actually pay as little or much as you want for anything we distribute. If you search archive.org for "savage wasteland music collective" you'll find most of our releases available for free download a month or two after they come out.

You can get more physical copies of this release (or other materials from us) by sending a letter explaining what you want with some well-concealed cash. Suggested price for this release is anywhere from $6-10, but pay as much or as little you want! You can also order stuff online using our website.

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I don't spend time responding to email correspondence. You are welcome to send me letters at the P.O. Box. I usually respond to letters written in a spirit of solidarity and communication between potential comrades and accomplices in the struggle against control, but I do not respond to fan mail. Whatever I symbolize to you, I am not that. Whatever you lack, I cannot provide. Begin the terrible struggle on your own, comrade, and meet me as an equal or not at all. No gods, no masters, no fans.

SOME THOUGHTS REGARDING CONSENT

This article deals with sexual violence.

My first sexual experience was not consensual. An older guy in my high school got me drunk and convinced me to do things that I didn't want to. I was unclear about my sexual identity. I thought I should be okay with the things he wanted as part of being open-minded and exploring my sexuality. I realize now that he pressured me to abandon my own desires to satisfy his.

I have been lucky enough not to experience lasting trauma from this event. This is related to my position in our society, specifically as a man without previous experiences of sexual abuse. I was able to take this event as an aberration that I could expect, with some confidence, wouldn't be repeated. Cultural norms and media representations of sexuality tend to depict sex as a campaign of conquest undertaken by people like me. Prison is one of the only environments where I was taught to fear that my body could be taken by force.

Plenty of people I know, raised in different environments or assigned different identities, don't brush off an experience like that so easily. It creates (or reinforces) a norm, since most of us are not raised to think about sexual consent in terms more complex than the absence of a clear (or "clear enough") no. This understanding is not adequate for navigating intimate relationships of respect and equality in a culture where sexual harassment and violence, and the corresponding trauma associated with them, are widespread (and disproportionately directed at women and trans* folks).

Active consent, based on the clear expression of "yes" rather than the lack of "no," is a straightforward way to do something about this in our own relationships. Different people practice this principle in different ways. The zine "Learning Good Consent" (http://zinelibrary.info/learning-good-consent) is a good place to start learning more.

As an anarchist I don't believe that gender equality is possible without overturning the society that produces gender inequality in the first place, but the least I can do in the meantime is to limit the damage I do personally.

And if you aren't a crazy anarchist intent on making total destroy and liberation, chances are that you know people who are effected by sexual violence (whether you know it or not). So please think about this. Read about this. Talk to other people about this.

(December 2013)

These are some questions to help get you thinking about consent in your own life, taken from the zine "See no speak no hear no."

Have you ever been unsure about whether or not the person you were being sexual with wanted to be doing what you were doing? Did you talk about it? Did you ignore it in hopes that it would change? Did you continue what you were doing because it was pleasurable to you and you didn't want to deal with what the other person was experiencing? Did you continue because you didn't want to second guess the other person? How do you feel about the choices you made?

Do you think it is the other person's responsibility to say something if they aren't into what you're doing?

Have you ever tried to talk someone into doing something about which they showed hesitancy?

Have you ever asked what kinds of signs you should look for if they are having a hard time verbalizing when something feels wrong?

Do you check in as things progress, or do you assume the original consent means everything is okay?

Do you ever get yourself into situations that give you an excuse for touching people you think would say no if you asked? Examples might include dancing, getting drunk around them, falling asleep next to them.

Do you think it's possible to misinterpret silence for consent?

Have you ever used jealousy as a means of control?

Do you think it's okay to initiate something sexual with someone who is asleep?

Do you ever talk about sex and consent and abuse when you're not in bed?

LYRICS & SUPPLEMENTS

Tracks 1-5 have never been released on CD before.

This is a short batch of solo songs, prompted by my ongoing reflections on anarchism. I'm still quite young, but most people who get involved with anarchist circles are not still around by the time they're my age (at least in my experience of anarchism in the United States). There are innumerable factors that contribute to this phenomena, but these songs are most generally about the sense of escalating difficulty I experience in determining what the point of anything I do as an anarchist is supposed to be. And I can see how that would be a major factor in people drifting away from anarchism as they grow older.

The revolution is not going to happen, at least not the way people wrote about it in the 1800s. "Building the new world in the shell of the old" demands investing inhuman levels of energy into establishing more-or-less effective models of alternative social values so that they can be stripped for parts by recuperators before being demolished entirely. The charity work anarchists often undertake (Food Not Bombs, bike co-ops, etc) is all nice and friendly stuff, but it is harder and harder for me to convince myself that it is related in any way to the overall project of establishing a world without domination. Anarchism penetrated my thinking twelve years ago, and no other conception of life has threatened to supplant it since. Yet there is no apparent path from this world to another. I have no solution to this dilemma. So these are songs about sticking it out anyway--probably not due to any rationality on my part, but also not just out of stubbornness.

Perhaps what I'm trying to communicate with these songs is that I became an anarchist the way one falls in love, not the way one balances competing arguments in a debate. To be so in love with freedom that everything becomes worth risking for it requires the madness of romance and lust, not the reason of a logician. Turning away from it all now would be to live a life knowing what passion is, but never permitting myself to experience it. There are many good reasons to believe anarchism is stupid, but I'm not sure anything would be more stupid than living like that.

(November 2013)

1) Times worth living (the tension)

"Anyone who thinks about what freedom actually is, even for a moment, will never again be able to content themselves by simply doing something to slightly extend the freedom of the situations they are living in. From that moment on, they will feel guilty and will try to do something to alleviate their sense of suffering. They will fear they have done wrong by not having done anything till now, and from that moment on their lives will change completely."
Alfredo Bonanno: The Anarchist Tension

It's too late for me, my friends. Once I gave refuge to the notion, even for a moment, there was no turning back to comfort again. Only a lifetime of defeats, more or less spectacular, so I'll march on to your court dates. I'll gather court dates of my own. I'll miss the ones in prisons and the ones who never made it there. The ones who said: "Onward, comrades!" to our death with ruin on their breath, the weight of centuries on their tongues, loading failed manifestos in their guns. As if defeat, repeated often, could someday mean we had won.

Our history's a vacant lot littered with empty bank accounts, sobbing parents, broken bones, glorious songs, lengthy prison terms, a handful of moments that were truly our own—in between desperate gasping for air worth breathing and times worth living. In between desperate gasping for air worth breathing and times worth living in.

2) Let's take a ride like we used to (the loathing)

"A definition of nihilism could be the realization that 'conditions in the social organization are so bad as to make destruction desirable for its own sake, independent of any constructive program or possibility.' This exposes one of the greatest idealistic flaws of modern activism: The articulation of the specific world-to-be as a result of your actions does not guarantee that world's creation."
Aragorn: Nihilism, Anarchy and the 21st Century

Came to this world a loaded handgun, firing at random. Hit the people who were closest, not the ones who deserved it and some of them still don't talk to me. Can't say I blame them for a second. I'll try to aim more carefully, but it's too late for that, I reckon, but not too late for regret. I'll walk barefoot and smoke inside any chance I get, but in the mean time:

Come on, let's go for a ride like we used to. Pistols drawn, screaming "liberty or death," although I think we wanted both somehow--but we'll take the cash instead. Stack it high, my friend, until it reaches to the sky, and us and god can call it even. And look each other in the eyes like you did to the county prosecutor. Told him that you were the shooter, but they'd never take you alive. Grabbed his pen, and stabbed him in the eye, ran off never to be seen again. When they strike, hit back harder. If you can't, just hit back meaner. Everybody's got a name, and an address, and fragile bones to protect what's beating in their chest. Lash out, and vanish into mist. Gumshoes can take one in the head, same to anyone who's ever seen a cop and didn't bludgeon them to death, same to anyone who's ever had a job and didn't hang their fucking boss off the roof at the post office. So come on, let's take a ride like we used to. Daggers drawn, screaming "liberty or death," although I think we wanted both somehow. Came in this world a loaded handgun. I'll leave it empty, or not at all.

3) Someday I will (the longing)

"The secret is to really begin. The present social organisation is not just delaying, it is also preventing and corrupting any practice of freedom. The only way to learn what freedom is, is to experiment with it, and to do so you must have the necessary time and space."
Anonymous: At Daggers Drawn with the Existent, its Defenders and its False Critics

Someday when I'm a better man than this, I'll listen to this stack of folk punk demos. I'll be eating apples and vegetables and shit by then. I'll breathe in more oxygen than smoke. I won't reference books that I haven't read, or that I read so doped up that I couldn't talk. I'll learn to like animals, even your fucking dog. Dah dah dah. Dah dah dah dah dah dah dah. Someday when I'm a better man than this, I'll tell this cop to his face that he's a fucking pig. I'll be pulling jail breaks and shit, sending nail files in your birthday cakes, metal spoons to dig a tunnel bit by bit. I won't be able to give you a ride to work because I sold the car to print consent zines for every high school kid in the country. Dah dah dah. Dah dah dah dah dah dah dah.

4) We'll get arrested, or shot (the defeat)

"If anybody really knew how to end global oppression we probably would have done it by now. So let's just admit that we don't really know what we're talking about, and we're just going to try stuff out and see what happens. Try an idea, let us know if it works."
Andrea Smith: The antiviolence movement and the non-profit industrial complex, transcript

We'll dig up concrete to plant vegetables across the street. Neighbors and tweakers passing by will stop for something to eat. We'll set up milk crates as a free box, then we'll get arrested by the cops. And if we fight back then we'll get beaten and arrested on felony charges by the fucking cops. We'll lock down to gates and buses, we'll block off the streets, because nothing else has worked to stop those fuckers in BP (Border Patrol). We'll clog up the system, we'll grind Streamline* to a stop, then we'll get arrested by the cops. And if we fight back then we'll get beaten and arrested on felony charges by the fucking cops. Seize entire cities, yeah, whole regions of a country. Abolish all police, religion, private property. We've done it before; united, we cannot be stopped! Then we'll all get lined up and shot by fascists, or just Communists and liberals who've been waiting all along to become the fascist cops.**

*Operation Streamline is a system for mass court convictions of undocumented people in Arizona (where I live). There is ongoing resistance to this process, and recently protesters actually shut it down for a day. You can read some about all of that at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/14/operation-streamline-detainees-deported_n_4096894.html, although I'm sure that there are much better write-ups about those actions from sources that I am not finding easily while posting this at 1:36 AM.

**This verse is about anarchists in 1930s Spain, who put many elements of anarchism into practice in large regions of the country during the Civil War. They also got slaughtered by most every other faction involved in the war. Fascists, Communists, and partisans for the elected government that had been overthrown in the military coup--i.e. Liberals--could actually agree on one thing, which was shared animosity towards anarchists. Spain 1936 is widely agreed to be the high water mark of anarchism in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and maybe it was, but the fact that our "greatest victory" was just a particularly spectacular defeat is telling. Aside from all that, it's a fascinating story. Here's a sweet documentary where they talk to elderly anarchists who were personally involved: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0XhRnJz8fU

5) For the sake of the ashes (the darkness)

"It seemed to me that the last human beings were dying in prisons and camps and would leave no heirs, while a horrible mutation of the species was taking place outside. I thought of committing suicide, or of finding a way to return to my prison cell so as to live out my days among comrades and die among human beings."
Fredy Perlman: Letters of insurgents

This morning I can't tell if I'm nihilist, or religious, or if there's even a difference. If god made the West Texas highway, guess there probably isn't. There's a darkness in my bones. It reaches all the way down to the mud. There's a spark that's in your eyes. It catches flame, and it burns all through my blood. And every friend locked up or raided, it's reason enough to go all in, to raise the stakes, to call the bluff. To burn all the world down for the sake of the ash. For the things that we've got coming through the storm of gasoline and broken glass. This morning I can't tell if I'm anarchist, or religious, or if there's even a difference. If I'm waiting for the right time to act, well, guess there probably isn't. There's a darkness in my bones. It reaches all the way down to the mud. There's a spark that's in your eyes. It catches flame, and it burns all through my blood.

Tracks 6-10 were originally released on CD-R as "The Mark Inside."

Creative authenticity is a question I have been thinking about recently. On a certain level, it's arguably impossible: songwriting is always about making characters, however close to your "real life" personality those characters happen to be. On another level, my experience as a music listener has led me to believe that there is an undefinable quality to the writing I identify with that reflects a certain...something.

I hesitate to call it truth. Yet I am forced to admit that old Mountain Goats albums feel true, although I know they are works

of fiction. They are more true, on this level of meaning, than singing a grocery list would be (although the latter might be "true" in a literal sense). There is something mysterious about creative honesty that fascinates me.

These songs were produced with those thoughts in mind. I present a more fictionalized account of my life in these songs than I have in the bulk of my previous work. In general, my lyrics have been true in a literal sense (and hopefully in an emotional one). These lyrics reflect the broad outline of literal experiences, but I explore a series of characters with a darker interpretation of that experience than I hold personally (and who behave much more dramatically within similar circumstances than I would).

In reality, I am pretty happy almost every day. This has generally been the case for me over the last three years. Life involves struggle, of course, but I do not feel terribly burdened by that reality very much of the time.

But when I write, it's the darkness that interests me. The darkness I believe will always be with us, to greater or lesser degrees. May we be led by it, always to a greater light. (April 2013)

6) Song for a stray cat on the fence

I skipped class and rode the number five bus all the way east, just to see where it ends. I smoked a cigarette at udall station, got back on the bus again. We've been this way since you met me: hearts not heavy, but empty. And once a song could raise me up, but now there's nothing, so I stumbled home a broken man with blood on my hands, dead on my feet, shot down where I stand. With blood on my hands, dead on my feet, shot where I stand.

Freedom is beautiful and terrible, it's nothing soft and sweet. It's used bullets on the side walk, fires across the street. It's you moving in with your new boyfriend in Oakland. It's a pack of wild dogs on a road without a street lamp. It's roaches in the bathroom, mice in the kitchen, and no one left to blame for the way I've been living. It's mice in the kitchen, roaches in the bathroom, and no one left to blame.

I woke up late and missed class again, so I brewed a pot of coffee and went back to bed. Snatch some bread selling junk from the back of the shed. Hop the fence, because the front's being watched by the feds. We've been this way since we've been alive: reckless and shy, so I set fire to the house and took off running. I hope that you won't mind. I burned down the house to get myself out of this hell alive. I burned down the house to get myself out. I hope you don't mind.

Freedom is nothing soft and sweet, it's beautiful and terrible. It's admitting everything that I don't want anyone to know. It's telling people that I love I stole from them when they weren't looking. It's fucking up so many times that they won't pick up when I call them. It's watching people die because they got back in it, and knowing that I don't have any say in it. It's watching people die, and knowing I don't get any say.

7) Song for a Netflix account

I lay down an awful wreck, pissing out my window and smoking in bed. The good don't die young, they just haven't had time to fuck up the same as the rest of us yet. I want nothing, nothing at all. I'd be driving drunk if I still got drunk. Rev the ignition, straight on to oblivion. Into a void as pure as they come.

But if we aren't dead yet, then let's not live as ghosts. If we aren't in jail, then we can leave the house. I'll show you that there's reason to hope in the spray paint that's all over downtown.

Let's fill up our shopping carts with the things we need and just roll out the front door, past the cashiers and security guards. But the magnets trip the wheel locks before we even clear the parking lot, and take off running through the neighbor's yard.

I lay down an awful wreck, mumbling to myself about the government again. Maybe postmodernism's just an extended tantrum about how we don't have our flying cars yet. I want nothing, nothing from them. I'd smash every machine if I didn't have one. Rev the ignition, straight onto oblivion, into a void as pure as they come.

But if we aren't dead yet, then let's not live as ghosts. If we aren't in jail, then we can leave the house. I'll show you that there's reason to hope in the spray paint that's all over downtown.

Meet me at the diner at six o' clock on every Wednesday night, and we'll get some coffee and pie. I'll smile, tip the waiter, get a ride home: "Thanks for the favor." And hope that that's enough to build a life.

8) Song for a chicken named Jenny

I eat cigarettes for breakfast, and coffee for lunch. For dinner I lay in the dirt and wait for the end times to come. I wish I could tell you the truth, but when I do it comes out sounding stupid. But meet me at four in the morning, and see for yourself. Sunrise, sunset, that's all I really gotta know. The rest is a prison that I build for myself. On my worst nights, I'd still burn down the city just for a peaceful night's rest. But here in your arms, my darling, I think that can wait, or I hope it can.

We murdered a chicken for breakfast, and ate it for lunch. She was beautiful, she was scrappy, she was mean as they come. And I told her on the way to the chopping block: "Chaos reigns over us all. One day I'll be worm food, but Jenny, first it's your turn." There's sunrise, and sunset, and then there's the day that I die. All the rest is a prison, or else it's a lie. At my worst times, I'd still murder a traffic cop to get out of a ticket. But here in your arms, my darling, police don't exist, or I hope they don't.

9) Song for Florence, AZ

The fences, the wire, the dress code on the wall. The transfers, the searches, the bullshit they paint in the hall. And the walls that hold you in are just a million ashes waiting for release. We'll shake the gates of hell until you're free.

The phone calls, the hearings: I hear the public defender's alright. The bailiffs, the judges: shareholders getting paid tonight. Just so many ashes waiting for release make up the walls of a prison cell. We're storming heaven, or we're raising hell.

10) Song for a supermarket parking lot

On Mondays, I do the laundry at a twenty four hour place next to the Dollar Tree. I know that I could walk, but god I love to drive. I thought about calling and asking forgiveness, but hell, I'm afraid of the dogs that I live with. I guess you take it one thing at a time.

I thought about Jesse on Tuesday morning; last I heard, he was still doped up in Portland. I could call and ask, but hell, I know he'd lie. Like my neighbor, he's got business. If you don't know about it, better keep your distance. Ain't no one on this street ever called a cop in their life.

On Wednesday, ran into Connor, drinking like he was already a goner. He said he'd like to change if he could grow a spine. I said: "When you talk like that, you make me real nervous. No, don't be inviting me to your funeral service. Throw down your fucking chips, let's play for keeps this time."

Like on Thursday when you called and woke me up. I heard you started smoking crack again and caught up: catching cases robbing houses, just to stay alive. So I hung up, and called Vanessa, and I told them that I left the rent on the dresser. It wasn't even half of three weeks late this time.

On Fridays, I do the laundry at the twenty four hour place next to the Dollar Tree, past the neighbors reaching heaven with their trucks so high. I thought about calling and asking forgiveness, but lately I don't even know what that word is. I've got police on my six, because they think it's a crime.

Tracks 11-20 were originally released on CD-R as "Die The Nightmare."

These are solo recordings of the songs on the Ramshackle Glory album, LIVE THE DREAM. This album is a lot less interesting than the original. I made this release as a fundraiser to help our band get a tour van. Last summer, we had five people and all our gear in a 1993 Toyota Camry. I never want to do that again.

I wrote this shit, sang this sit, played this shit, recorded this shit, mixed this shit, and tweaked this shit all by myself. I was smoking cigarettes and drinking energy drinks the whole time.

This collection of songs is a story about doing whatever it takes to do something different. I am not finished with that now, nor can I be.

The stakes can seem lower now. I can get distracted sometimes. But I have to be clear about this—I am not a different person. The needle will always be easier than the truth. From here, there is only motion or death. Something about that is really beautiful. I've never had more fun in my life.

Explanation of something: Tracks 12, 13, 14 are based on, or include lyrics from, songs I wrote or previous music projects. I

did not scavenge this material from the past because there weren't enough new songs to fill the album. Rather, these songs are crucial to the narrative presented by the album as a whole, which is very much about "getting sober," and should therefore deal with the circumstances that led me to do so.

An easy way to misinterpret what I mean by this narrative, and this album generally, is not to understand that tracks 12 and 13 take place before the rest (in a chronological sense). They do not reflect my life in the present tense, but are meant to provide a picture of the life I have been in the process of leaving behind since I took my last drink. Feedback I have received since the Ramshackle Glory CD came out suggests to me that many people who do not understand this.

Thematic & chronological order of the narrative goes: 12-13 (life before I got sober), 11 (about getting to rehab), 14-15 (about coming to terms with my past after getting sober), 16-20 (first year of sobriety).

Of course, all this is just what these songs mean to me. Anything that they mean to you is just as valid. I only offer this explanation for those who happen to be interested in my experience of this material.

(October 2011, accompanying song descriptions also from the original release)

11) First song (part 1)

"The junk merchant doesn't sell his product to his consumer, he sells the consumer to the product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies the client." (William Burroughs)

Everything about this place is intolerable. The very landscape seems a conspiracy to kills us all. I am surrounded by people who believe in the church and the state that make human beings into cattle.

The worst part about it is, they know a lot of things that I don't. They have a notion of getting through the day. The truth is, I am out of ways to try.

After many attempts to kick dope in my Vermont hometown, I moved to Tucson in order to enter long-term rehabilitation. I have been sober since I arrived on December 8, 2009.

No one needs to tell me how to get (get get) down, but won't somebody show me how to get back up? I thought about killing my landlord, but he was pretty nice. Instead, I paid my rent on time as often as I could.

I've been making strange friends in the desert; (yeah) they love Jesus and America too. It ain't as bad as it sounds, someday I'll explain it to you.

It's not that I mind sleeping all alone in the grass, it's just that I've been dreaming since…well, maybe I ain't woke up yet. But nothing's been quite the same since you shot yourself. I don't know if you believe in ghosts. I hope you'd haunt me if you were one.

I've been trying not to steal from everybody I know but so far that's impossible. But here in the desert, somehow I hope that someday it won't be that way for me. No it won't…be that way for me, anymore.

12) More about alcoholism

"The actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly an exception, will be absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge." (Alcoholics Anonymous)

In those days, we were savage, brilliant, and righteous. Our actions were reckless, but not more so than we were charming. At least, I always thought so.

There was a sense that these were components from which a revolution could be built. Drinking, drugs, and traffic law violations were just waiting to be combined properly into a campaign of total guerrilla warfare against the forces of control. Who better than us to learn how it would work?

But once I had to convince you not to build bombs in our living room to blow up police cars. It was too late at night for it to be funny, and you were very serious in any case. I knew then what was really going on.

I remember when the judges started sending me to see substance abuse counselors. They would evaluate me, to determine if I had a drinking problem. At the time, I believed that an alcoholic

was someone who liked to drink all the time. I also knew that I liked to drink all the time. But I didn't tell the juvenile substance abuse counselors that. Later, I would realize that I did not like drinking all the time anymore, but that never stopped me from doing it.

This car is a war machine that runs on nicotine and gasoline. D-d-d-don't you fucking know this is the wrong side of the road? Who needs brakes when it's all down hill from here? And if we ain't died yet then maybe we never will.

But I don't wanna burn out, so won't you please set me on fire again? I woke up afraid of losing everything; thank god that I already have. So if you love me then listen: mind your own fucking business! if you love me enough to stay, then please love me enough to stay...enough to stay away.

I swear on my last cigarette that I'd love you my d-d-darling. I'd love you if I could. But since the day I was born, it's been too late for me to be anything but what I am tonight. And what I am is drunk, and what I am is mean, in your passenger seat. Seat belts are for people who have time to die; hell, I don't even have time to sleep.

Because I don't wanna miss a moment of loathing everything that I see. I stay up nights afraid of everything, till all that's left is the shadows and me. Ask me from sunrise to sunset: no, I ain't left the house yet. I finally love you enough to stay...enough to stay away.

Aw, shit, I wish I had a job to quit. I wish I had a boss that I could tell to fuck off. Give me the satisfaction of a dramatic exit, and not just a long car ride and a short goodbye in a parking lot. (ohohoh.)

13) We are all compost in training

"I fell the choice deep inside: heroin or suicide?" (Leftover Crack)

I wake up. I make coffee and smoke for a while. I poop. I sell pot to a high school kid who comes over. I nod out while reading a book about occupied Palestine. I am sure this book is good, but I can't remember a word of it. I put on an episode of This American Life. I smoke for a while. I notice half an hour later that I know this episode is good, but I can't remember a word of it. It cost me two hundred dollars to manage all this today. I know this is killing me. I know this is killing you. I know that nothing can change this. I know it would be better if I wasn't here.

There was a long time when I wanted to stop, or knew that I had to, before I did. I would get off junk or a couple weeks and start drinking until I wasn't sure which was worse. I would get back on dope. I would kick dope and give up drinking. I would get back on dope. There was never enough of anything. Not enough dope. Not enough beer. Not enough money. Not enough stuff to sell. Lack and deprivation was all that god had made for us. It was that way for a long time.

I want freedom, not a boss that comes in a forty ounce bottle of anything or taped scotch paper. I eat meat and drive trucks and shoot guns and don't trust in the federal government to solve our problems. You might think I'm joking, but I'm not a republican. Call me when your president pulls out of afghanistan, because that's the day I'll get a cell phone number, and you can call and leave a message on voice mail that day.

I fell asleep smoking so I'd wake up on fire, because that might get me out of bed for a while and back into battle with the things that I breathe, and the holes in my arms, and the way that I think. And if freedom is doing what I want, well that means I gotta know what is, not just what it isn't. So I'll dig up the dirt and I'll throw down some seeds, because the world needs more spinach, not more motherfuckers like me. Motherfuckers like me! (ohohohoh, etc.)

14) From here to Utopia

"Let's get sushi...and not pay!" (Duke, Repo Man)

I can use punk rock as a bomb shelter to hide from responsibility. That was how I lived my life for years, as a matter of fact. Many things have changed, but the way I love the things I do has probably changed the most.

Well, I'm afraid that the circles I've been drinking myself aren't big enough for the vowels that I try to fit inside of them. (CIRCLE A! CIRCLE E!) When I was young, I drank too much, and I'd be lying if I said I didn't feel so goddamn young tonight; maybe

too young to ask what's on my mind. Like: if freedom means doing what you want (well), don't you gotta want something? and won't you tell me that we want something more than just more beer? and my friends, if that ain't true, won't you lie to me tonight?

Well, I've been listening to minor threat records all day, and shit if I do not know every word. I sing along as I tie off. And Ian screams he's "out of step" as I throw the cotton into the spoon, draw up into the syringe. I'll know just what he means until I hit a vein. But after that I won't have to bother with knowing who I am, for a while at least. In a moment the whole world is gonna melt around me, and I'll swear I don't miss it as a I lie to you tonight.

Because I'm afraid to look the world in the eye. If nothing's gonna change, well, then I'd rather die. And I'm too unemployed to organize a union; I'm too intoxicated to tear down a building. I'm too hopeless to look for a solution; I'm afraid that if I found one, I'd be out of excuses for the way I waste away in the gutters that I chose like fashion accessories to go with my dirty clothes. I haven't bathed in months, but you know it's not because I've been fighting bourgeois morals: I'm just lazy and I'm young.

I've seen the best minds of my generation dying drunk or high from the rooftops to the parking lots, stomped to death in west philadelphian squats. They've got me waiting on a day when we can say "fuck the police!" with a little bit of integrity, when it will mean: "I've got your back if you've got mine!" Give me a scene where I believe in more than bad hair cuts, guilt, and misery. I don't know where I fit between the vegans and the nihilists. That might be the first thing I've said that wasn't a lie tonight.

Because there's gotta be something more than lying in the front yard, naked, screaming at the constellations. I want something more than an apology to say when I look the world in the eye. I'll tell you, man, my friend William came to me with a message of hope. It went: "Fuck you and everything that you think you know. If you don't step outside the things that you believe, they're gonna kill you." He said: "No one's gonna stop you from dying young, and miserable, and right, but if you want something better, you gotta put that shit aside." I thought about how for thousands of years there have been people who told us that things can't go on like this: from Jesus Christ to the Diggers, from Malthus to Zerzan, from Karl Marx to Huey Newton, but the shit goes on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and

on and on and on and on and on.

Now, I'm not saying that we can't change the world, because everybody does at least a little bit of that. But I won't shit myself: the way I'm living is a temper tantrum and I need something else, need something else, need something else to stay alive. (ohohoh.)

And on the night that I play my last show, I'll be singing so loud that my heart explodes. And I'll be singing, and I'll be singing: "We are free!" Oh, but won't you promise me that we won't ever forget what the means? I know it's hard to give a shit sometimes, but promise me we'll always try. Because I don't wanna hate you, and I don't wanna hate me, and I don't wanna have to hate everything anymore.

15) Never coming home

"I don't quite understand this worship of objectivity in journalism. Now, just flat-out lying is different from being subjective."
(Hunter S. Thompson)

If you asked me, I would tell you there are people in my life who I love. But I'm lying. I can't stand the people I love most of all. They are asking me to breathe underwater. Don't they know that's impossible? I can't do it. Breaks their heart. Fuck you.

My words have no currency. They are cuban pesos at a nebraskan convenience store. This is the best I can do. Please don't follow me. Goodbye.

For a variety of strange reasons, I spent two months of my rehabilitation in a town called Wickenburg. I was placed in a house by the train tracks. At night, I would smoke cigarettes on the porch. I would think about friends that might be on the trains going by. I would think about the suffering I had caused to those I cared about, and who cared about me. I would think about how it's not possible to take those things back.

The trains roll by my porch, down here where nothing can live, and I've been smoking too much because I am no exception. You knew that already, I think. If you want salvation, then you ought to go see a priest, because forgiveness from those that we hurt in this world never was guaranteed. I'm coming home, it's late again, I'm high as I've ever been. You're sitting up, you're in our bed crying for a ghost again. No room could be as dark or as empty

as ours is, because I'm at home but I'm not here, and I never am.

I wonder how many friends roll past my house in the night? in boxcars they sleep with hearts stashed in their backpacks. They'll make california all right. A promise from me is just a lie I ain't told yet, so I'm ready to die but I'm not willing to watch you watch me die here in our bed. I'm lying down, I've been nodding out since I don't know when. The lights are on, you're standing up screaming at a ghost again. Darling, I'm home; hell I ain't left this house of ours in days. But I'm not here. I never am. So I just can't stay. My darling, I'm never coming back from where I'm going. My darling, I'm never coming home. My darling, I'm never coming back from where I'm going. My darling, I'm never coming home. Never coming home again.

16) Vampires are poseurs

"There is no greater fallacy than the belief that aims and purposes are on thing, while methods and tactics are another." (Emma Goldman)

I swear that I had never been awake before. My whole life had passed while I was sleeping, acting without thought or reflection. I had sought freedom by severing all those ties which bind me to other people, and in doing so I had guaranteed only isolation and death.

What things will look like from now on, I couldn't say. But I can promise you that I will stop at nothing to find out.

I let go of many things that had driven me. I discarded much of my anger, my fear, and my dishonesty. I was afraid that without these things I would disappear. Instead, I started finding out who I have always been.

I don't believe in heaven. I do believe in hell. It's down the street from here, and we both lived there for years. We burned the calendars for warmth, and the alarm clocks just for fun. We closed the blinds to make goddamn sure that we could never see the sun. You could set a watch by the bottle returns and the ashtrays overflowing on the floor. Nothing's free but time when you're so damn poor.

But the past was death row, and the future's a battlefield. I hope we choose the right war. Because I've been fist fighting gravity since the day I learned how to breathe, and I still wake up on the same cold floor I fell asleep on. So I won't, but we shall overcome someday. I can't do it alone, but I shall be free someday. I don't know how to live, but I'm sick of learning how to die. Vampirism is for poseurs in junior high.

We made our own postal system to cross the continent. As long as freight trains run and loners pick up dreamers with thumbs, who needs governments to get a letter to you, or a mixtape to me, or a postcard to johnstown? what's a thousand miles between friends? what's a friend that's not worth crossing a country? but I owe money and broken hearts from Philly to Sydney and back to Vermont. I regret a million things and that's only what I haven't forgot.

But the past was a mine field, and right now is a prison break. I hope we make it alive. When who we are doesn't stop where the law begins, then we'll storm their court houses to survive. So I won't, but we shall overcome someday. I can't do it alone, but we shall be free someday. I don't know how to live, but I'm sick of learning how to die. Vampirism is for poseurs in junior high.

17) Of ballots and barricades

"Majority democracy, we might say, can only emerge when two factors coincide: a feeling that people should have an equal say in making group decisions, and a coercive apparatus capable of enforcing those decisions. For most of human history, it has been extremely unusual to have both at the same time." (David Graeber)

In the town I grew up in, all the affairs of local government were handled through an annual town meeting open to all citizens of voting age who wanted a say in whatever decisions were to be made.

For all the criticism I hold as an anarchist toward any form of government, including Vermont town meeting, I believe that I missed out on a comparatively empowering method of collective decision making, largely due to being too lazy and drunk to attend town meeting.

It made me think that maybe I should register to vote in local elections in Tucson. It also made me think that a lot of the debate among anarchists about whether to vote or not misses what, to me,

is the real point: what to do the rest of the year to undermine systems of control.

What needs doing cannot be done for us by the state.

I got Arizona residency one day too late to vote on this election day. Every year before I've been too drunk to register. Then I'd say: "I don't believe in it anyway." I still shake my head at ballots cast for elephants, and shake my head at ballots cast for donkeys, because I swear to god our leaders will be death of us. There's no ballot we can cast to set us free. But there's no brick we can throw that will end poverty, and we can't blow up SB1070. Things will never be as simple as when I was twelve years old reading karl marx in my bedroom alone. Since there have been laws, there have been criminals. There have been thieves since there's been property. And the way will come again when none of those things are around; I just hope it's before people go extinct. So vote november 2nd if it seems right to you, or don't vote if you think it just holds us down. Just tell me what we're gonna do on november 3rd to make sure there's no government left to elect two years from now.

18) Bitter old man

"Old age is one o the most unexpected things that can happen to a man." (Leon Trotsky)

My fist punk show was spent in wild-eyed amazement. I can't tell you who played—unmemorable riders of the late-90's crust punk revival wave.

I can tell you that people ran and bumped into each other while the bands played, sometimes inside a circle formed by those who didn't want to run and bump into other people. But it was not out of anger, and nobody got hurt. People seemed concerned for each other's well-being.

I can tell you that I met other people who were not much older than me who had ideas about politics too. They had tables of literature about it. They knew about Mumia Abu Jamal too. They weren't fans of capitalism either. They were anarchists. What did they think of Marxism?

This was what I had needed all along.

But I'll tell you what happened. Actually, it's easier to tell you what didn't happen. The revolution didn't happen. Everyone wasn't always nice. It pissed me off. I needed a revolution to happen. I needed someplace where everyone would be nice to me.

By fifteen years old, I hated punk as much as I had loved it three years before. I was jaded already. I was an old man, yelling at the kids these days.

If you wanted an explanation, I couldn't justify it to you, but I am less cynical than I used to be. I am having a good time. I really expect something wonderful to happen most days. Sometimes my friends still go to jail. That still makes me angry and sad.

I was born a bitter old man who got his heart broken in Catalonia, 1936. I haven't felt right since, so I gave up on life before I arrived. I knew this place wasn't safe for anyone but fascists and republicans and their apologists. But I swear to god, I'm gonna die full of naive optimism; a teenager's heartbreaking conviction that things can be different. Oh yeah, things are gonna be real different when we're finished around here.

I always wanted to die young. I always wanted to die young. I always wanted to die young; now I feel younger every day, and I just hope I die younger than I am.

I can hear you from a dozen states away shivering through a dope sick morning of no money left and nothing else to steal. Lord only knows that I've had my share, because there were years when I was ready to die, but it's only been recently that I've been willing to live. And I swear to god, I didn't plan for things to end up this way. I had a teenager's conviction that I would be different. Oh yeah, I was gonna be real different than the person I became.

I always wanted to die young. I always wanted to die young. I always wanted to die young; now I feel younger every day, and I just hope I die younger than I am.

But now living's a struggle, except when it isn't. (yeah), I woke up this morning and I wasn't in prison, but I can't promise that I'm far from it. I'd still kill a man for cigarette, but with friends like you, who needs homicide? So this song goes out to all our homies locked down. Come on back now, we need you around. That judge, he doesn't know what he's done. No, judges never know the things they do. How could they?

19) Your heart is a muscle the size of your fist

"Things are never quite as scary when you've got a best friend."
(Calvin & Hobbes)

I love you. I miss you. I am so glad you didn't give up on me.

My friends rule.

Dalia never showed me nothing but kindness. She would say: "I know how sad you get. And some days, I still get that way, but it gets better. It gets better. It gets better. Sweetie, it gets better, I promise you." and she tells me:

Your heart is a muscle the size of your fist. Keep on loving. Keep on fighting. And hold on, and hold on, hold on for your life.

Ian built a cabin in the woods to live in. For years, terrifying noises kept him up at night with a twelve gauge under his pillow. He's living in boston now, going to art school. I forgive him. I forgive him. Hell, I'll admit it: I'm proud of him. Serena's an architect and a carpenter. She's such a feminist she says she isn't one, because goddamn, my gender shouldn't matter. And her motorcycle glides through the streets of providence, down to the warehouse district. The paint job is as stunning as her knowledge of medieval building techniques.

Your heart is a muscle the size of your fist. Keep on loving. Keep on fighting. And hold on, and hold on, hold on for your life.

This one goes out to Georgios. He knows how to dance. Abby banks, your book is beautiful, and fuck anyone who says otherwise. Scott, I love you and you make me glad to be alive. I promise that I'm gonna pay you back. You always know how funny everything is, even when I'm so serious that it's gonna be the death of me.

Like the time that our friend Chuck came over to our house. He said he needed somebody to take care of his pets, because he was going out of town. I asked him: "Where?" and he said: "New Mexico." I asked if I could get a ride. He said: "No, you don't want to follow me where it is that I'm going." He pulled out of the drive way. That was the last time we saw him, because he drove straight to his parent's cabin and put a bullet in his head.

Your heart is a muscle the size of your fist. Keep on loving. Keep on fighting. And hold on, and hold on, hold on for your life.

20) First song (part 2)

"The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty; not knowing what comes next."
(Ursula K LeGuin)

There is work to do. I am not afraid, because I know you will be there to help.

I took the needle out of my arm about a year ago today, and every day since then I've been taking the needle out of my brain. So when I'm staring down at my hands I can't explain just what it is that I'm thinking of, except thank god that all my veins have to pump is my blood.

And I've done you so much wrong I can't believe you would still talk to me. And I say so much bullshit I can't believe that anyone around me can breathe. I know that it's a little dramatic, but the word for not changing is "death." So I'm getting better, my friends, but please don't hold your breath.

And I met a man in rehab the first time, an organizer in prison. He lived in Chicago when the cops shot Fred Hampton, but he was just a kid back then. Justice doesn't flow from police guns. I'm reminded of that all the time. As long as there is a law, peace will be a crime.

What the news calls economics, I still call it violence. If your god is a judge or a jailer, I'm still an atheist. But I try to have faith in the things that will happen; I get saved from myself when I do. So maybe "god" isn't the right word, but I believe in you.

CHORDS

These should get you started. You'll have to piece it together and smooth out the edges a bit. But this is supposed to ship in a week, and I don't even have it layed-out (much less printed or assembled), so forgive a little sloppiness.

1)
B-F#-G#m-E (x4)
B-B-F#-F#-C#m-C#m-E-E (x4)
B-F#-G#m-E (forever)

2)
F#m-C#7
D-C#7-F#m [very last line]

3)
G-C-G-G (x2)
G-D7-C-G (x3)
D-C-C7

4)
E-A-E-A-E-A-B-A
E-E-G#-G#-A-A-B-B
A-B-E-G#-A-B

5)
C-G-Dm-F

6)
G#m-A#-C-F (x2)
G#m-A#-C-G#m (x6)
A#-F-G#m-D# (x6)

7)
G-Em-D-C (x2, before singing)
G-Em-D-C (x4)
G-G-Em-Em-C-C-D-D
C-D-G-Em-C-D-Em-D
C-D-Em-D-C-D

8)
C-G-Am-F (x2, before singing)
C-G-Am-F
C-G-Em-F
C-G-Am-F
C-G-F-F

9)
Em-A-C-Em
Em-A-C-B-Em
C#m-B-E-A
B-C-B

10)
A-E-F#m-D
A-E-D

11)
C-E-F-C
C-E-F-G
F-G-Em-F
F-F-G-G
C-Em-F-C
C-E-F-C
C-G-F-G

12)
Recorded in drop D tuning.
D-D-D-F
A-A-A-G
D-Em-G-A
D-A-Bm-G
F#-F#-G-A
D-F-G-A#-C
D-D-F-A#
D-F#-G-A

13)
G-D-Em-C

14)
Am-E-Am-G-E
F-Am-E-Am-
F-Am-E
Am-G-E-F
C-E-Am-F
G-F-C-G-Am-F
Am-E-F-C-G
Am-E-F-G
C-E-Am-F-G
C-E-Am-G-F-E-C-D
Am-Dm-Am-E
Am-Dm-F-E-Am

15)
E-B7-A-A
E-B-C#m-A
E-C#m-B-A
E-C#m-A-B

16)
D-Bm-F#-G
D-A-G-A
D-F#-B-G,A
D-Bm-G-A
D-A-Bm-G

17)
G-C-G-G
G-C-D-D
G-C-G-Em
C-D-G-G

18)
D-Bm-A-G
D-Bm-A-G-D-G
A-G-D-Em
A-Bm-G-A
D-Em-G-A
Em-G-D-Am-G
D-Gm
D-Bm-G-G

19)
D-A-G
D-A-Bm-G
D-G
D-G-A-D

20)
C-E-F-C
C-E-F-G
F-G-Em-F
F-F-G-G
C-Am-F-F

READING LIST

BEGINNINGS.

Learning Good Consent, compiled by Cindy Crabb.
zinelibrary.info/learning-good-consent

The Anarchist Tension, by Alfredo Bonanno.
theanarchistlibrary.org/library/alfredo-m-bonanno-the-anarchist-tension

Whiteness and the 99%, by Joel Olson.
bringtheruckus.org/files/OWS_Whiteness.pdf

Designed to Kill, by Anonymous.
crimethinc.com/texts/recentfeatures/border.php

GENERAL PROPAGANDA SOURCES.

theanarchistlibrary.org
zinelibrary.info

AUDIO PROPAGANDA SOURCES.

audioanarchy.org
crimethinc.com/podcast/
tcnradio.org
ashevillefm.org/the-final-straw

ACTION.

NYC Anarchist Black Cross
nycabc.wordpress.com
Anarchist Black Cross does prisoner support work, especially for anarchist or otherwise revolutionary prisoners. There are chapters all over the country (we have one in Tucson, as a matter of fact), but the NYC chapter is especially active in spreading up-to-date information about a large number of prisoners and their cases. A great resource for learning where to start in doing prisoner support work yourself. Support work can be as simple as writing a letter to a prisoner! It's a great way to get involved with the struggle no

matter what town you live in, what the political context is, whether you know other anarchists & radicals, etc.

Critical Resistance
criticalresistance.org
I think this is the largest prison abolitionist organization in the United States (maybe the world). "Prison abolition" means they straight-up want to end prisons—not make them less bad or more good, but totally end the prison system. Most people who are reading this zine will probably think that's a crazy idea. Check out some of their material and work, and I bet you'll at least think about the question differently (if not become a prison abolitionist yourself).

No More Deaths
nomoredeaths.org
Humanitarian aid group operating in the southern Arizona desert to directly reduce death and suffering among those crossing the border illegally.

O'odham Solidarity Project
solidarity-project.org
Solidarity with O'odham and other indigenous communities threatened by the border, violation of water rights, commercial development, and other examples of ongoing colonization.

FURTHER READINGS.

Perhaps less accessible material related to anarchist and radical ideas. These pieces are mostly written for an audience already exposed to, or involved with, radical organizing. I'm not sure what readers outside those circles will think of them.

Letters of Insurgents, by Fredy Perlman
theanarchistlibrary.org/library/sophia-nachalo-and-yarostan-vochek-letters-of-insurgents
This is my favorite book, despite its flaws. Unfortunately it's out of print right now, but you can read it online. Written as a collection of letters between two former comrades in struggle, separated from each other now by decades, geography, and contrary experiences. Challenges readers to consider what terms like "freedom" and "liberation" mean, and whether we are truly prepared to accept the consequences of embracing them. This is a potentially heavy and

emotionally challenging work that deals with sexual & child abuse.

The Problem With Privilege, by Andrea Smith
andrea366.wordpress.com/2013/08/14/the-problem-with-privilege-by-andrea-smith/
A critique of the limitations faced by many approaches to race, gender, and others forms of privilege within radical organizing circles, from an indigenous feminist perspective.

Lines in Sand, by Peter Gelderloos
theanarchistlibrary.org/library/peter-gelderloos-lines-in-sand
Examines the tension between "anti-oppression" and "social war" factions of the U.S. anarchist community. This makes for a good, specifically anarchist complement to some points raised by Andrea Smith in "The Problem With Privilege."

Dangerous Spaces: Violent Resistance, Self-Defense, & Insurrectional Struggle Against Gender.
zinelibrary.info/files/dangerous.pdf
A collection of insurrectionary anarchist queer, feminist, and trans* writing.